MARVEL® COMICS PRESENTS™
MARVEL COMICS
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BLACK BOLT™
AND THE INHUMANS™

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

RICHARD ASHFORD EDITOR
MICHAEL KRAIGER ASSISTANT EDITOR
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COVER BY REGGIE JONES

BLACKBOLT

"HISTORY LESSON"

WRITER .....REGGIE JONES
ARTIST .....JEFF MOORE
LETTERS .....MICHAEL HIGGINS
COLORS .....CRAIG MICHAELS

Black Bolt and his fellow Inhumans must stop an archaeologist's expedition in order to save the sanctity of the "Hidden Land".

SPIDER-WOMAN

"SWEET REVENGE"
PART 3 OF 3

WRITER .....NEL YOMTOV
PENCILS .....JOHN CZOP
INKS .....TIM DZON
LETTERS .....SUSAN CRESPI
COLORS .....LORETTA KROHL

After being stalked and shot, Spider-Woman nabs her biggest fan.

NEXT ISSUE:

FORCE WORKS

HANDS OF THE MANDARIN

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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Dear Richard and Michael,

I'm not a regular reader of MCP, but when I read MCP 156, I had to write a letter. Why? Because I'm German, and the story about a German super hero in World War 2 was great!

I couldn't stop laughing!!! Tell Jon Babcock he'd better take a crash course in German the next time he decides to write in German.

I like MCP a lot and I'll be reading it for a long, long time. And I'd like to make a wish. How about a story with the Punisher in Germany?

Christoph Bröckers
Am Baidhog 34a
Neuss 41464
Germany

Well, Christoph, thanks for the praise; we always like to hear from our fans overseas. And we're glad you enjoyed Der Zerstörer so much. It doesn't look like the Punisher will be making any trips to Deutschland any time soon, but imagine the possibilities. And Mr. Babcock didn't write the story, Dan Slott did. And Dan swore to us that he knew German. He really did.

Dear Richard and Michael,

Here's yet another double letter, this one concerning MCP #161 and 162. Both issues were well done. The New Warriors/Slapstick story was a superb serial. I like that it has taken a humorous slant, because I am tired of all the grim and gritty comics around. Nicieza's humor in "Smells Like Teen Spirit" certainly set this story apart from the standard super hero fare. However, the correct line from Hamlet is "Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio." The Impossible Man should brush up on his Shakespeare.

I'm glad you're spotlighting Tigra. Not only hasn't she been seen since Avengers West Coast #74, but she is also a female character. Giving her the cover was a good idea, since Czop and Dzon rendered her beautifully. I wasn't as thrilled with the inside story, since the Sultan looks like your typical "lusts after beautiful women" bad guy, and his henchmen seem like rip-offs of the Reavers. Still, I'm giving the story a chance, since I've only seen the first part.

I'm glad you raised the issue of smoking comic book characters in your editorial in 162. I'll admit that the Thing, Nick Fury, and Wolverine all seem out of place without cigars. Of course, Nick Fury can smoke because he has the Infinity Formula, and the Thing, due to his mutated anatomy, probably wouldn't get lung cancer. I'm glad that Wolverine recently quit, now that his healing factor is weak due to his recent injuries. I also appreciate Nicieza having the X-Men make the X-Mansion smoke-free. Still, I'd like to see Gambit and other comic book smokers, such as John Blaze, kick the habit. Your editorial also reminded me of one other point. I've often seen comic book heroes kicking back and relaxing with a can of beer or some other alcoholic beverage. Does that send a message to young readers that drinking is all right? That's another point that should be seriously addressed by comic book creators.

Ben Herman
45 Runyon Place
Scarsdale, NY 10583

Whew! Thanks, Ben. We think Fabian's done a

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VENGEANCE

"GHOST VS. THE MACHINE"
PART 2

WRITER .....CHRIS COOPER
BREAKDOWNS .....REGGIE JONES
FINISHES.....FRED HARPER
LETTERS .....UL HIGGINS
COLORS .....ASHLEY POSELLA

Vengeance and War Machine battle it out in the streets of South Central L.A.

VALKYRIE

"FREEDOM"

WRITER .....MARIANO NICIEZA
PENCILS .....PINO RINALDI
INKS .....PINO RINALDI
LETTERS .....DIANA ALBERS
COLORS .....DIANNE BUSCEMA

On her quest for peace in the mountains, Valkyrie must battle Taaru the Terrible and his minions.

FROM RICHARD AND MICHAEL (AND SUE)

HI GUYS. MIKE WENT TO THE SAVAGE LAND TO FIND HIMSELF, AND I'M TAKING OVER. JUST KIDDING. MIKE IS ACTUALLY ON VACATION IN SCOTLAND AND I'M JUST COVERING FOR HIM. LAST SUMMER, I USED TO BE AN INTERN HERE, AND NOW I'M AN ASSISTANT EDITOR, TEMPORARILY THAT IS. I TELL YOU, I'M STEPPING UP IN THE WORLD. NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE I WAS LAST HERE. ACTUALLY RICHARD AND MICHAEL ARE IN A NEW OFFICE NOW, ONE WITH WINDOWS. AND ON A SUNNY, CLEAR DAY, WE FLASH SIGNS AND MAKE FACES AT THE GUYS IN THE BUILDING ACROSS FROM US.

ANYWAY, RICHARD AND MIKE ARE TWO OF THE GREATEST GUYS TO WORK FOR, AND NO, THEY DIDN'T PAY ME TO WRITE THAT! I LEARNED A LOT WHILE I WAS HERE, LIKE HOW EVERY COPY MACHINE WILL BREAK DOWN WHEN YOUR EDITOR NEEDS 20 COPIES OF EVERYTHING. WELL, LOOKS LIKE I'M OUT OF ROOM, AND BESIDES THERE ARE COPIES TO BE MADE. SEE YA!

RICHARD AND SUE

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great job too with the New Warriors. And you're right, super heroes are not always brooding, bad-guy smashing he-men, or women for that matter. They've got to have fun sometimes. As for smoking and drinking, you bring up a good point. In a past editorial, Richard and Michael brought up the issue of smoking. Occasionally our characters do light up and drink, but it's only to set the atmosphere and the reality of life. We don't support smoking or drinking, but unfortunately it's become a part of life. We're not saying it's all right to do either — that's a decision left up to the individual.

Dear Richard and Michael,

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS continues to score with winning stories in issues 162 and 163. I don't remember being more pleased, except for when big-name talents like Tim Truman, John Byrne, or Barry Windsor-Smith contributed.

"Smells Like Teen Spirit" should be reprinted in a double-sized special issue of the New Warriors, because I think a lot of the title's readers are missing out on this, one of my favorite Warriors stories. Fabian Nicieza's story was great, although Slapstick and the Impossible Man stole the show. C'mon, if you can feature these two, I don't think that Rocket Raccoon would be a stretch. Or how about the Power Pachyderms? Seriously though, this story is a fun sequel of sorts to the Warriors' more intense time travel tale. The art by Robert Walker, Scott Koblish and John Staniscl was also top-notch.

The first part of the Tigra feature looked promising, although David DeVries' story took a downward spiral in these second eight pages. I was hoping to see more of this new and revitalized catwoman in her element, the jungle, without the disruption of cyborgs and mad Germans named Heinrich. Still John Czop and Pablo Marcos' art is giving Tigra a great new look, and the lettering was perfect. The back-ups in this title would be a wonderful spot to recreate Avengers Spotlight.

The Vengeance story was also a treat, giving us a lot of what we didn't expect. Chris Cooper did a nice job on the writing, and I enjoyed Diabolique as well as the climactic appearance of Salome, tying this in with the Midnight Sons family. Reggie Jones and Fred Harper keep getting better.

The Mace story was the only part I didn't enjoy of these two issues. It's curious why Carl Potts would opt to tie this into an obscure miniseries like Shadowmasters rather than capitalizing on the future. The writing itself wasn't bad, but the plot seemed contrived and, well, boring. Still Barry Crain and Hilary Barta's art coloring couldn't be beaten. And Ashley Poselia's coloring looked great.

The New Warriors cover by Reggie Jones was stunning. I hope the oversized logo drew some new readers into the fold. The Czop/Dzon effort also came out with flying colors. The continual improvement of MCP these past few months can't be beaten. See you in two weeks.

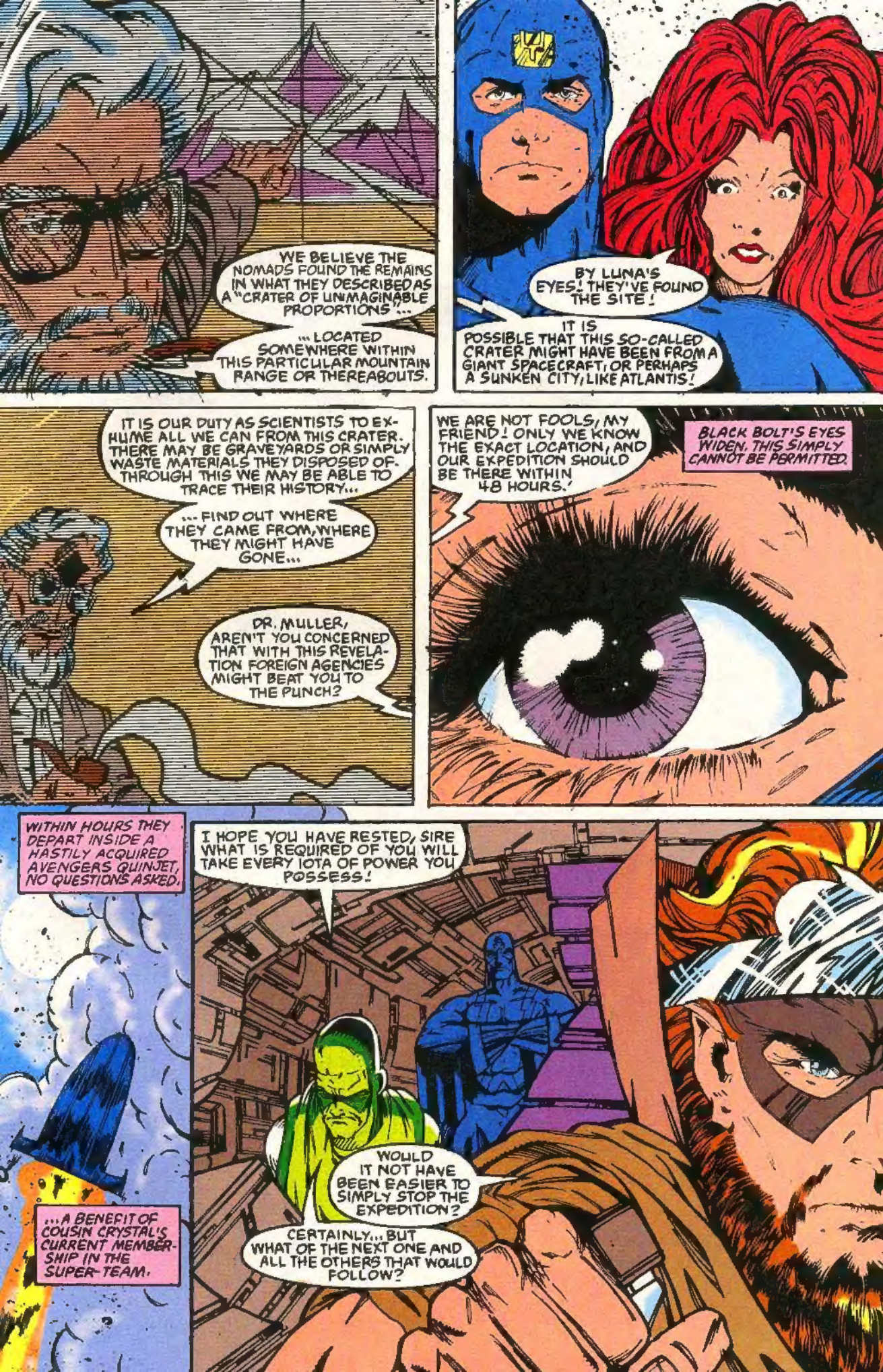
Joey Marchese
P.O. Box 802
Clark, NJ 07066

Thanks.

Now a question for our readers: where are the female fans of MCP? Come on write to us.

I MET A TRAVELER FROM AN ANTIQUE LAND WHO SAID:
"TWO VAST AND TRUNKLESS LEGS OF STONE STAND IN THE DESERT.
"NEAR THEM ON THE SAND, HALF SUNK, A SHATTERED VISAGE LIES, WHOSE FROWN AND WRINKLED LIP, IN SNEER OF COLD COMMAND,
"TELL THAT ITS SCULPTURE WELL THOSE PASSIONS READ WHICH YET SURVIVE STAMPED ON THE LIFELESS THINGS.
"THE HAND THAT MOCKED THEM AND THE HEART THAT FED:
"AND ON THE PEDESTAL THESE WORDS APPEAR:
"'MY NAME IS OZYMANDIAS, KING OF KINGS:
HISTORY LESSON
OZYMANDIAS BY PERCY SHELLEY
"'LOOK ON MY WORKS, YE MIGHTY, AND DESPAIR.'"

HE IS BLACK BOLT. LEADER OF A RACE OF GENETICALLY ADVANCED BEINGS KNOWN AS INHUMANS.
AS HE LOOKS DOWN ON THE VAST, EMPTY PIT WHERE ONCE THRIVED HIS KINGDOM, HIS THOUGHTS DRIFT BACKWARDS...
MY LORD, LADY MEDUSA... FORGIVE OUR INTRUSION THERE IS A PROGRAM ON TELEVISION THAT BEARS WATCHING.
AN ARCHAEOLOGIST CLAIMS TO HAVE A SKELETON, FOUND IN THE HIMALAYAS BY A NOMADIC TRIBE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.
BY ALL INDICATIONS, IT WAS FOUND IN THE VAST MOUNTAINOUS REGION THAT CONCEALED FROM HUMANS OUR HIDDEN LAND...
BEFORE WE RELOCATED TO THE MOON. THIS COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME... GORGON?
I SHARE KARNAK'S CONCERN. IF THIS IS INDEED AN INHUMAN OR ALPHA PRIMITIVE SKELETON, WHAT ELSE MIGHT THESE HUMANS LAY THEIR HANDS ON?
...BUT, DR. MULLER, IS FINDING A SKELETON REALLY IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO FINANCE SUCH A LARGE EXPEDITION?
NOT MERELY AN EXPEDITION, MY FRIEND... MORE A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.
THE SKELETON FOUND WAS NOT THAT OF A HOMO-SAPIEN. YET IT WORE REMNANTS OF CLOTHING AND JEWELRY.
MEANING?
MEANING THIS WAS NOT A PRIMITIVE SPECIES, RATHER IT BELONGED TO AN INTELLIGENT RACE OF BEINGS UNKNOWN TO US. THE HIMALAYAS IS STILL A LARGELY UNEXPLORED TERRITORY...
WHEN THE CONTINENTS OF INDIA AND ASIA COLLIDED 45 MILLION YEARS AGO, FORMING THEM, PERHAPS THIS AREA ALSO SPAWNED A SPECIES, A CIVILIZATION UNKNOWN TO MAN.


WE BELIEVE THE NOMADS FOUND THE REMAINS IN WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS A "CRATER OF UNIMAGINABLE PROPORTIONS"...
...LOCATED SOMEWHERE WITHIN THIS PARTICULAR MOUNTAIN RANGE OR THEREABOUTS.
BY LUNA'S EYES! THEY'VE FOUND THE SITE!
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS SO-CALLED CRATER MIGHT HAVE BEEN FROM A GIANT SPACECRAFT, OR PERHAPS A SUNKEN CITY, LIKE ATLANTIS!
IT IS OUR DUTY AS SCIENTISTS TO EXHUME ALL WE CAN FROM THIS CRATER. THERE MAY BE GRAVEYARDS OR SIMPLY WASTE MATERIALS THEY DISPOSED OF. THROUGH THIS WE MAY BE ABLE TO TRACE THEIR HISTORY...
...FIND OUT WHERE THEY CAME FROM, WHERE THEY MIGHT HAVE GONE...
DR. MULLER, AREN'T YOU CONCERNED THAT WITH THIS REVELATION FOREIGN AGENCIES MIGHT BEAT YOU TO THE PUNCH?
WE ARE NOT FOOLS, MY FRIEND! ONLY WE KNOW THE EXACT LOCATION, AND OUR EXPEDITION SHOULD BE THERE WITHIN 48 HOURS.'
BLACK BOLT'S EYES WIDEN. THIS SIMPLY CANNOT BE PERMITTED.
WITHIN HOURS THEY DEPART INSIDE A HASTILY ACQUIRED AVENGERS QUINJET, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.
...A BENEFIT OF COUSIN CRYSTAL'S CURRENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE SUPER-TEAM.
I HOPE YOU HAVE RESTED, SIRE WHAT IS REQUIRED OF YOU WILL TAKE EVERY IOTA OF POWER YOU POSSESS!
WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN EASIER TO SIMPLY STOP THE EXPEDITION?
CERTAINLY... BUT WHAT OF THE NEXT ONE AND ALL THE OTHERS THAT WOULD FOLLOW?

THE QUINJET LANDS ON A PEAK OVERLOOKING THE ENDANGERED SITE...
IT IS BEST YOU RETURN TO THE CRAFT, MY LORD. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU CONSERVE YOUR STRENGTH.
GORGON AND I SHALL LOCATE THE VITAL SPOT.
BLACK BOLT NODS. FINDING THE WEAK SPOT IN VIRTUALLY ANYTHING IS A SKILL AT WHICH KARNAK IS TRULY UNSURPASSED. FOR NOW HE MEDITATES AND WAITS...
... FOR THE CALL.
BLACK BOLT HAS ARRIVED, COUSIN. ARE YOU READY?
YES. OUR HOURS OF SURVEYING HAVE FINALLY BORNE FRUIT.
YOU MUST STRIKE HERE WITH UNERRING PRECISION AND UNWAVERING POWER!
YOUR STREAM OF ENERGY MUST BE CONSTANT AND CONTROLLED, ACCURATE TO THIS EXACT POINT!
COME, GORGON. WE MUST LEAVE.
BUT, BLACK BOLT...
...MUST PERFORM THIS TASK ALONE.

THE QUINJET SPEEDS OFF TO A SAFE AREA, ITS OCCUPANTS PRAYING TO THEIR GODS FOR BLACK BOLT'S SUCCESS...
BUT THE TIME IS NOW...
...AND SURVIVAL.
...AND THE FUTURE OF HIS PEOPLE IS AT RISK.
AS THE FORKED ANTENNA ON HIS FOREHEAD BEGINS TO SMOLDER...
...HE FOCUSES ON HIS TARGET, BRACING HIMSELF FOR THE IMPACT OF NATURE UNBOUND.
BLACK BOLT UNLEASHES A STREAM OF PURE IONIC ENERGY...
...CRACKLING IN THE AIR LIKE A FORCE UNINHIBITED...
...A FORCE EXTREME...
...A FORCE UNTAMED.

THE ENERGY DOES NOT MERELY STRIKE THE ROCK FACE. RATHER IT FLOWS WITHIN, MINGLING WITH ITS MOLECULES.

BLACK BOLT IS OBLIVIOUS AS TO HOW LONG THIS CONTINUES, IGNORING HIS PAIN AND GROWING WEAKNESS...

...FOR HE CAN FEEL HIS ENERGY CAUSING A DOMINO EFFECT, RIPPLING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, SHIFTING ROCK, ICE AND SNOW.

AND HE DRAWS STRENGTH FROM THE PARTING WORDS OF DR. MULLER...

"I SEE US IN THE SAME LIGHT AS ALL THE GREAT SEEKERS... MAGELLAN, DAGAMA, COLUMBUS. DISCOVERING NEW LANDS, NEW PEOPLES, LEARNING FROM THEM AND BLESSING THEM WITH OUR OWN WAYS AND KNOWLEDGE."

IT IS SAID THAT THOSE WHO IGNORE THE PAST ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT, THAT HISTORY TEACHES US OUR MISTAKES.

BUT HISTORY SHOWS THAT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE NAPOLEONS AND HITLERS.

ONLY THE FUTURE ONES MIGHT, SADLY, PROVE MORE EFFICIENT.

RRRRUMBLL

THE EARTH SHIFTS AND SLIDES; MOUNTAINS FALL AND AVALANCHES BURY THE HIDDEN SITE.

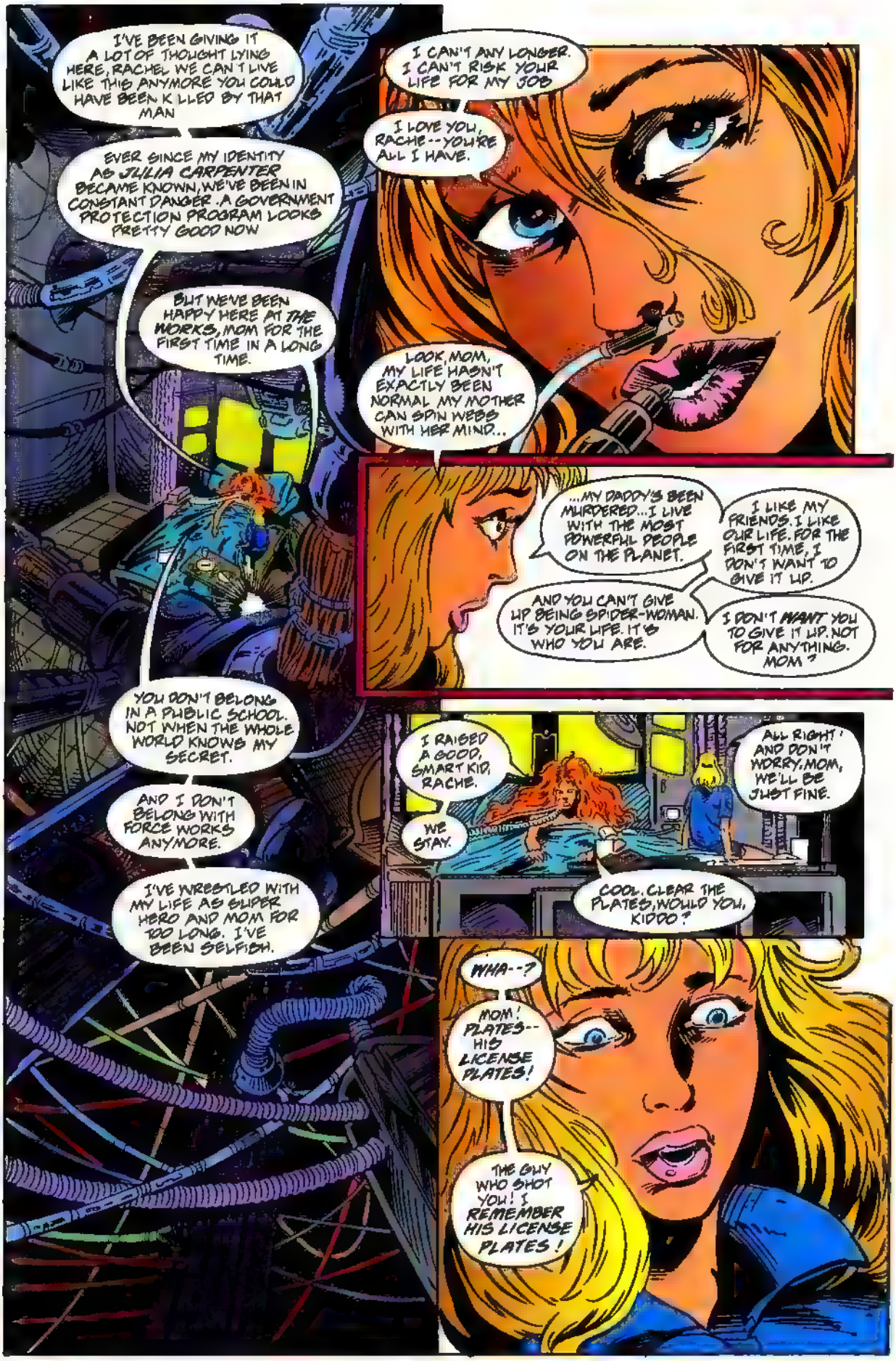
AS THE EARTH CLOSES AROUND HIM, BLACK BOLT MUSES THAT WHILE FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW COLUMBUS WAS A HEROIC ADVENTURER...

...FROM ANOTHER HE WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A PIRATE AND PLUNDERER.

"NOTHING BESIDE REMAINS
'ROUND THE DECAY OF THAT
COLOSSAL WRECK,
BOUNDLESS AND BARE.
"THE LONE AND LEVEL SANDS,
"STRETCH FAR AWAY."

SWEET REVENGE
FORCE WORKS HEADQUARTERS. VENTURA, CALIFORNIA.
THE PATIENT TRIES TO REST EASILY IN THIS STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY.
THE PATIENT IS SPIDER-WOMAN.
YESTERDAY, A MADMAN TRIED TO BLOW HER BRAINS OUT.
THE DOCTORS SAY YOU'LL RECOVER QUICKLY, JULIA.
LUCKILY, THE BULLET ONLY GRAZED YOUR SIDE.
FEELS LIKE I'VE BEEN RUN OVER BY A LOCOMOTIVE, WANDA.
YOU LET THOSE BROKEN RIBS HEAL, SPI. AND DON'T GO OFF TRYIN' TO BE SOME KIND OF AVENGING NUTCASE.
YEAH, JULIA, REMEMBER-- THAT'S AGENT'S JOB.
FUNNY, IRON MAN, REAL FUNNY.
SPIDER-WOMAN

I...CAN'T BELIEVE HOW STUPID I WAS WHEN AMANDA CHANEY SHOWED ME THOSE FAN LETTERS--
--I SHOULD'VE KNOWN SOME LUNATIC WAS AFTER ME.
HE..WAS THE ONE WHO SHOT AT ME AT THE MALL LAST WEEK. AND THEN YESTERDAY WHEN I WAS PICKING UP RACHE AT SCHOOL.
AND HE JUST GOT AWAY CLEAN. NO LEADS. NO NOTHING--
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, SPI!
THERE'S WAY TOO MANY SICKOS OUT THERE WHO WANT TO MAKE THE HEADLINES.
TOO MANY GOOD PEOPLE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THESE ANIMALS!
EASY, AGENT.
I'M GONNA FIND THAT SLIME PUDDLE AND RIP HIS--
ENOUGH! IT'S TIME WE LEFT..
GET SOME REST, JULIA. WE'LL STOP BY LATER.
THANKS, GUYS. SAY HI TO CENTURY FOR ME, WILL YOU?
YEAH, SURE. REAL NICE OF HIM TO SHOW UP WITH US, SCARLET WITCH...
DROP IT, AGENT. CENTURY SIMPLY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND OUR CUSTOMS.
AMANDA AND TODD WILL STOP BY A LITTLE LATER.
DON'T STAY TOO LONG WITH YOUR MOM, RACHEL. SHE NEEDS HER REST. BYE, YOU TWO.


I'VE BEEN GIVING IT A LOT OF THOUGHT LYING HERE, RACHEL WE CAN'T LIVE LIKE THIS ANYMORE YOU COULD HAVE BEEN K LLED BY THAT MAN
EVER SINCE MY IDENTITY AS JULIA CARPENTER BECAME KNOWN, WE'VE BEEN IN CONSTANT DANGER. A GOVERNMENT PROTECTION PROGRAM LOOKS PRETTY GOOD NOW
BUT WE'VE BEEN HAPPY HERE AT THE WORKS, MOM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME.
YOU DON'T BELONG IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL. NOT WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD KNOWS MY SECRET.
AND I DON'T BELONG WITH FORCE WORKS ANYMORE.
I'VE WRESTLED WITH MY LIFE AS SUPER HERO AND MOM FOR TOO LONG. I'VE BEEN SELFISH.
I CAN'T ANY LONGER. I CAN'T RISK YOUR LIFE FOR MY JOB
I LOVE YOU, RACHE--YOU'RE ALL I HAVE.
LOOK, MOM, MY LIFE HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN NORMAL MY MOTHER CAN SPIN WEBS WITH HER MIND...
...MY DADDY'S BEEN MURDERED...I LIVE WITH THE MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE ON THE PLANET.
I LIKE MY FRIENDS. I LIKE OUR LIFE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT UP.
AND YOU CAN'T GIVE UP BEING SPIDER-WOMAN. IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S WHO YOU ARE.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO GIVE IT UP. NOT FOR ANYTHING. MOM.
I RAISED A GOOD, SMART KID, RACHE.
WE STAY.
ALL RIGHT! AND DON'T WORRY, MOM, WE'LL BE JUST FINE.
COOL. CLEAR THE PLATES, WOULD YOU, KIDDO?
WHA--?
MOM! PLATES-- HIS LICENSE PLATES!
THE GUY WHO SHOT YOU! I REMEMBER HIS LICENSE PLATES!

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.
FLIGHT 210 IS NOW READY TO BOARD. PASSENGERS IN ROWS 1 THROUGH 15 MAY BEGIN BOARDING NOW.
SO I SEE WE MADE THE HEADLINES AGAIN, JULIA.
LOS ANGELES TIM
SPIDER-WOMAN SHOT
THE DOCTORS ARE EXPECTING A COMPLETE RECOVERY
DER-WO
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I DON'T MIND TRAVELING.
ESPECIALLY FOR THE RIGHT REASON.
I'LL BE BACK TO FINISH OFF MY JOB.

GATES
AND YOU'LL REGRET EVER HAVING IGNORED ME.
EVER HAVING MADE ME FEEL SO BADLY.
I'M SORRY, MISS, THERE'S SIMPLY NO WAY TO KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW.
HE RETURNED THE CAR, BUT HE CAN BE ANY-WHERE IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW.
YOU CAN FILE A REQUEST WITH THE POLICE--
RIGHT. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, MISS.
I CAN'T HANG AROUND WAITING FOR HIM TO COME BACK AND GET ME.
I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM-- BEFORE HE KILLS ME.
BUT WHERE IN GOD'S NAME--
--DO I START?
ANDRE'S CAR RENTAL
JULIA, HOW NICE OF YOU TO DROP IN.
A CHANCE TO REDEEM YESTERDAY'S POOR PERFORMANCE.

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, JULIA. DON'T MOVE.
ANDRE'S CAR RENTAL
LOOK OUT! SOMEONE'S COMING AT YOU! HE'S GOT A GUN! RUN!
WHA--?
LOCK
YES, JULIA. GOODBYE FOR KEEPS.
OH MY GOD-- NO! NOT AGAIN--!
HEY, MISTER, WHAT'RE YOU DOING WITH THAT THING?
THAT KID! GOTTA, MOVE FAST!
CATCH THIS, YOU LOWLIFE SCUM--
--AND CURSE THE DAY YOU CHOSE TO MESS WITH SPIDER-WOMAN!

TH RAASSHH!
YOU DOG! HUNTING ME LIKE I WAS AN ANIMAL!
THE PEOPLE YOU ENDANGERED... MY DAUGHTER...
I SHOULD CRUSH YOUR SKULL AND LEAVE YOU TO DIE AS YOU LEFT ME!
GOD HELP YOU--
WHOA, IT'S SPIDER-WOMAN, MOM!
HUH?
I LOVE YOU--YOU'RE MY IDOL!
OH, SPI--
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?

I'M GOING TO PRESS CHARGES AGAINST YOU, LOWLIFE--
--AND SEE TO IT THAT YOU NEVER SEE ANOTHER DAY OF FREEDOM IN YOUR WRETCHED LIFE.
I ALMOST LOST IT BACK THERE-- I WAS GOING TO SMASH HIM TO PIECES. THAT YOUNG GIRL--RACHEL'S AGE--SNAPPED ME BACK. THANK GOODNESS.
THIS PSI-WEB WILL KEEP HIM UNTIL AIRPORT SECURITY ARRIVES.
YOU'RE THE SECOND LITTLE GIRL WHO'S SET ME STRAIGHT TODAY, SWEETIE.
HOW 'BOUT A HUG FOR THIS EVER-LEARNIN' SPIDER-WOMAN?
AND HOW 'BOUT GETTING BACK TO WHERE I BELONG-- WITH RACHEL AND FORCE WORKS?
CHECK OUT FORCE WORKS EVERY MONTH FOR MORE SPIDER-WOMAN ACTION!

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SOUTH-CENTRAL L.A
VENGEANCE in
GHOST vs. THE MACHINE
THEY WEAR THE FACE-MASKS OF THEIR IDOL, VENGEANCE...
... AN IDOL WHOSE BRUTAL, FATAL METHODS THEY EMULATED AS THEY DISPENSED THEIR OWN BRAND OF VENGEANCE...
... AN IDOL THEY WORSHIPPED FROM AFAR ..

... UNTIL TONIGHT!

CALL OFF YOUR *REVENGERS*, VENGEANCE-- AND WE CAN CALL OFF THIS BATTLE!

IDIOT-- THEY'RE *NOT* MINE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, *WAR MACHINE!*

THEY JUST LIKE YOUR *FASHION* SENSE, HUH? SAVE THE *EXCUSES, KILLER--* YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU!

NOTE-- THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE WAR MACHINE #8 --RICHARD

BLAST IT, I CAME HERE AS *BADILINO* WITH *UNO'S STRIKE FORCE* TO STOP THIS "REVENGERS" MOVEMENT--

-- TO SHOW THEM A *BETTER* WAY THAN THE UNRESTRAINED VIOLENCE I *USED* TO BE OBSESSED WITH.

INSTEAD I'M GIVING THE REVENGERS A *"VIOLENCE HOW-TO"*...

... BECAUSE I'VE GOT TO FIGHT FOR *MY SURVIVAL* AGAINST THIS TIN-SUITED *DOLT*...

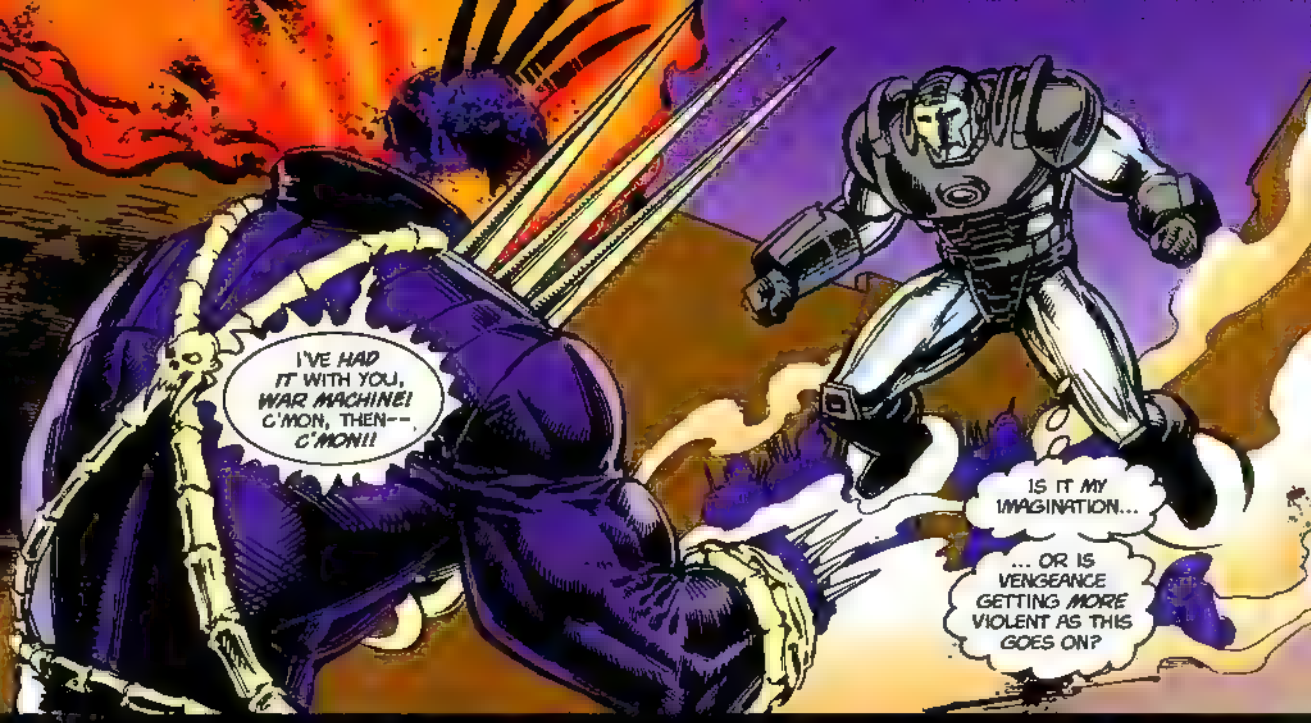
... WHO SEEMS TO HAVE THE *ADVANTAGE* AS FAR AS *STRENGTH* IS CONCERNED!

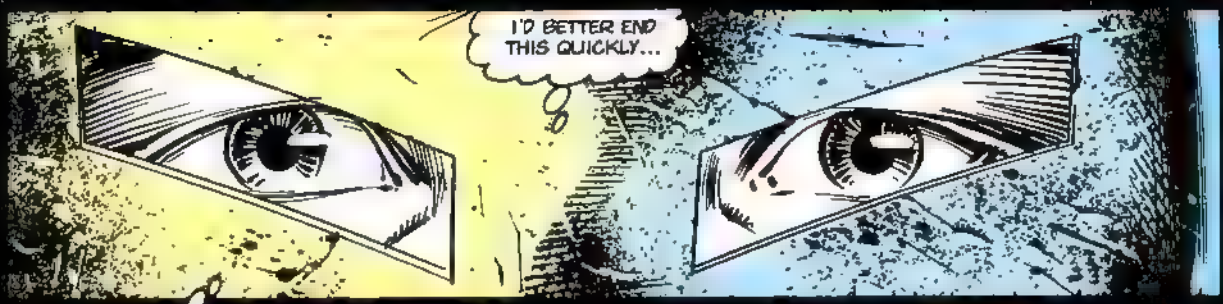
BUT *MAYBE* I CAN TURN HIS ADVANTAGE *AGAINST* HIM...

YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN NEW YORK, VENGEANCE..
... INSTEAD OF COMING TO L.A. TO RECRUIT IMPRESSIONABLE KIDS TO YOUR MERCILESS WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAYS!
--NOW!
RHODEY, THAT WAS DUMB. CAN'T AFFORD TO GET SLOPPY...
... NOT WITH MY ARMOR ON THE VERGE OF TOTAL BREAKDOWN!
I WAS ON MY WAY TO SPARK TO GET IT FIXED, WHEN I SAW THOSE REVENGERS SLAUGHTERING MY "PET GANG," THE WAR MACHINES.*
GOT TO SHIFT MY WEIGHT--
IF THAT FIGHT WAS A SAMPLE OF THE "JUSTICE" THEY PLAN FOR THE REST OF L.A., I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM HERE AND NOW...
... STARTING WITH THEIR LEADER!
I'M SICK TO DEATH OF YOU SANCTIMONIOUS SUPERTYPES! BACK OFF, TIN MAN--
-- OR SUFFER THE CONSE-QUENCES!
*LAST ISSUE. —RICHARD
REVENGERS: KILL HIM, VENGEANCE!
NOW, BUCHANAN, WHILE THEY'RE DISTRACTED--
KILL HIM! KILL HIM!

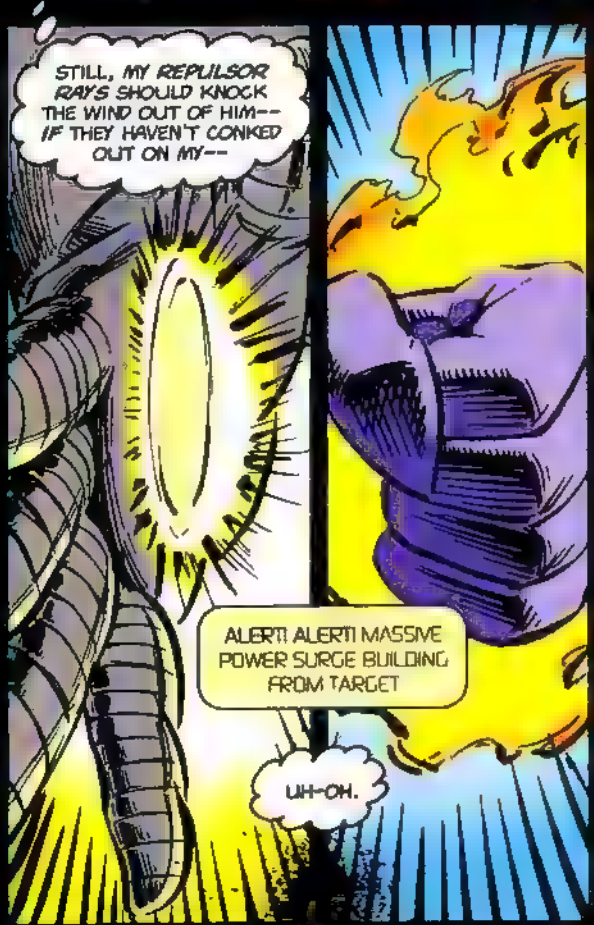
--WE CAN GET OUR PEOPLE TO SAFETY!
WHAT'S THE BOSS'S STATUS?
UNO'S IN ONE OF OUR TWO CHOPPERS, TAYLOR, WAITING FOR OUR SIGNAL FOR EVAC--
-- AND TWO NEWS CHOPPERS HAVE JOINED THE FRAY--
-- SO WHO'S FIFTH CHOPPER--
-- A HIGH-TECH STEALTH BOGEY SHADOWING US FROM SO FAR UP, EVEN WITH MY ADVANCED TRAINING I ALMOST DIDN'T SPOT IT?!
TAYLOR-- WE'RE BEING WATCHED!
THEN I'M TAKING THIS WHERE PRYING EYES WON'T SEE-- AND TAKING ONE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS REVENGERS WITH ME!
UNO SENT US HERE TO PUT THE REVENGERS OUT OF BUSINESS.
INSTEAD OUR ENTIRE STRIKE FORCE GOT ITS BUTT KICKED WHEN, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT, THE REVENGERS DOUBLED IN STRENGTH.
I WANT TO KNOW HOW THEY HULKED-OUT-- AHA!
THESE TUBES SEEM TO RUN ALL OVER THEIR OUTFITS... BUT FOR WHAT?
MAYBE THERE'S MORE TO BE LEARNED BENEATH THE MASK--
GASP!

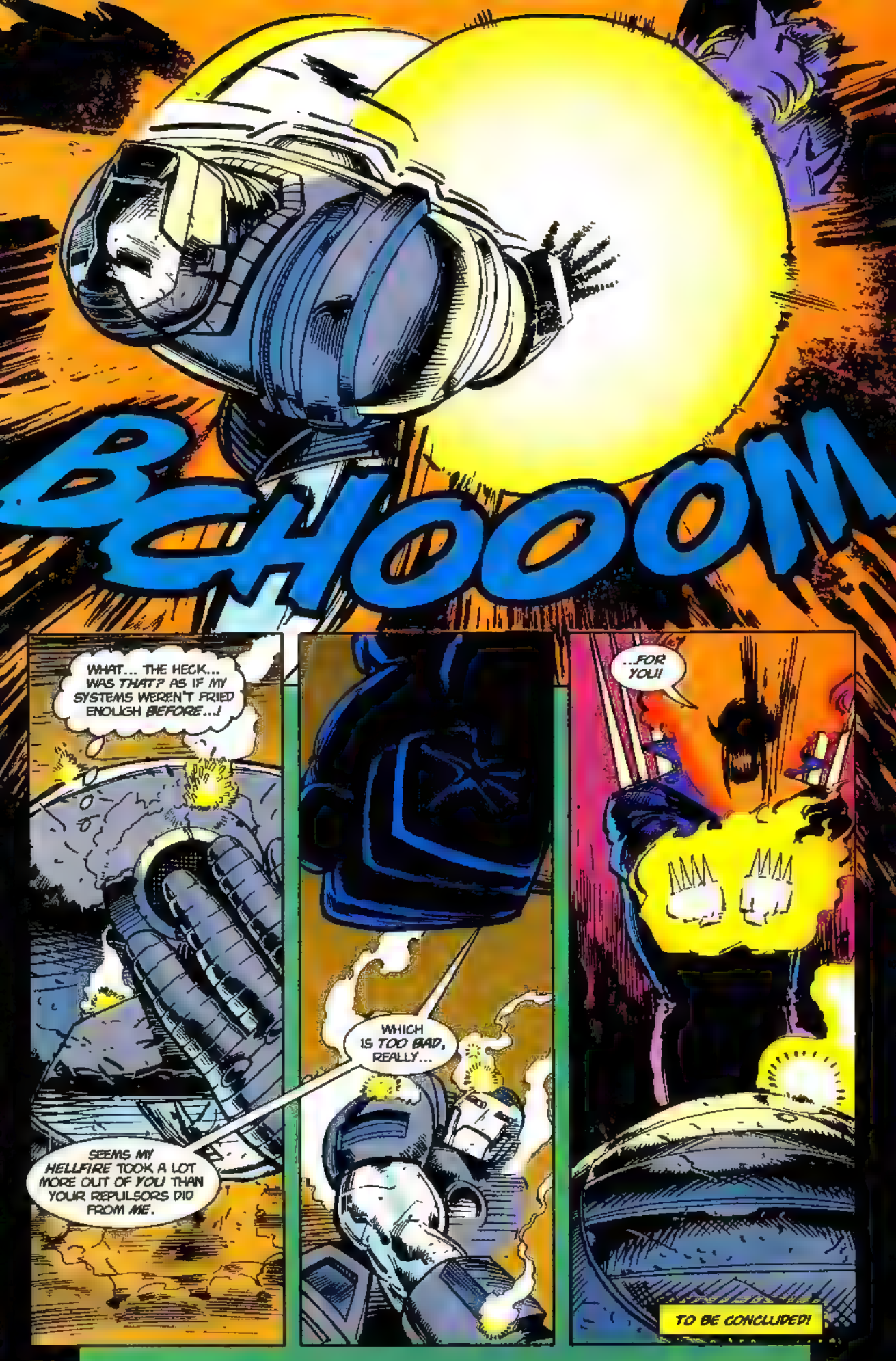
MEANWHILE, IN THE SECOND COMING REVIVAL PAVILION, OUTSIDE LAS VEGAS, NEVADA...
ONE MINUTE TILL SHOWTIME, REVEREND NICE-- AND BY THE WAY...
... WE'VE COLLECTED $500,000 IN CONTRIBUTIONS SO FAR TONIGHT!
HALLELUJAH!
WELL SAID, WENDY SUE!
IT SEEMS OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST VENGEANCE IS INSPIRING THE MASSES!
REVEREND! THAT UNCLEAN VENGEANCE DEVIL-- HE'S ON THE NEWS, FIGHTIN' WITH WAR MACHINE! IN L.A.
SO THE DEVIL HAS LEFT SODOM-ON-THE-HUDSON AND GONE TO BABYLON?
THE CANCER MAY SPREAD, BUT ONLY SO THAT THE LORD HAS AN EASIER TIME CUTTIN' IT OUT! BUT NOW...
... IT'S SHOWTIME!!
KNEEL DOWN AND PUH-RAY, PEOPLE! FOR AT THIS VERY MOMENT, IN THE LAND OF MICKEY MOUSE AND MORAL DECLINE...
... THE DEVIL'S AGENT, THE FALSE HERO, VENGEANCE, IS AT WORK-- AND HIS EVIL SCHEMES MUST BE DESTROYED!
DESTROY HIM! KILL HIM! KILL!

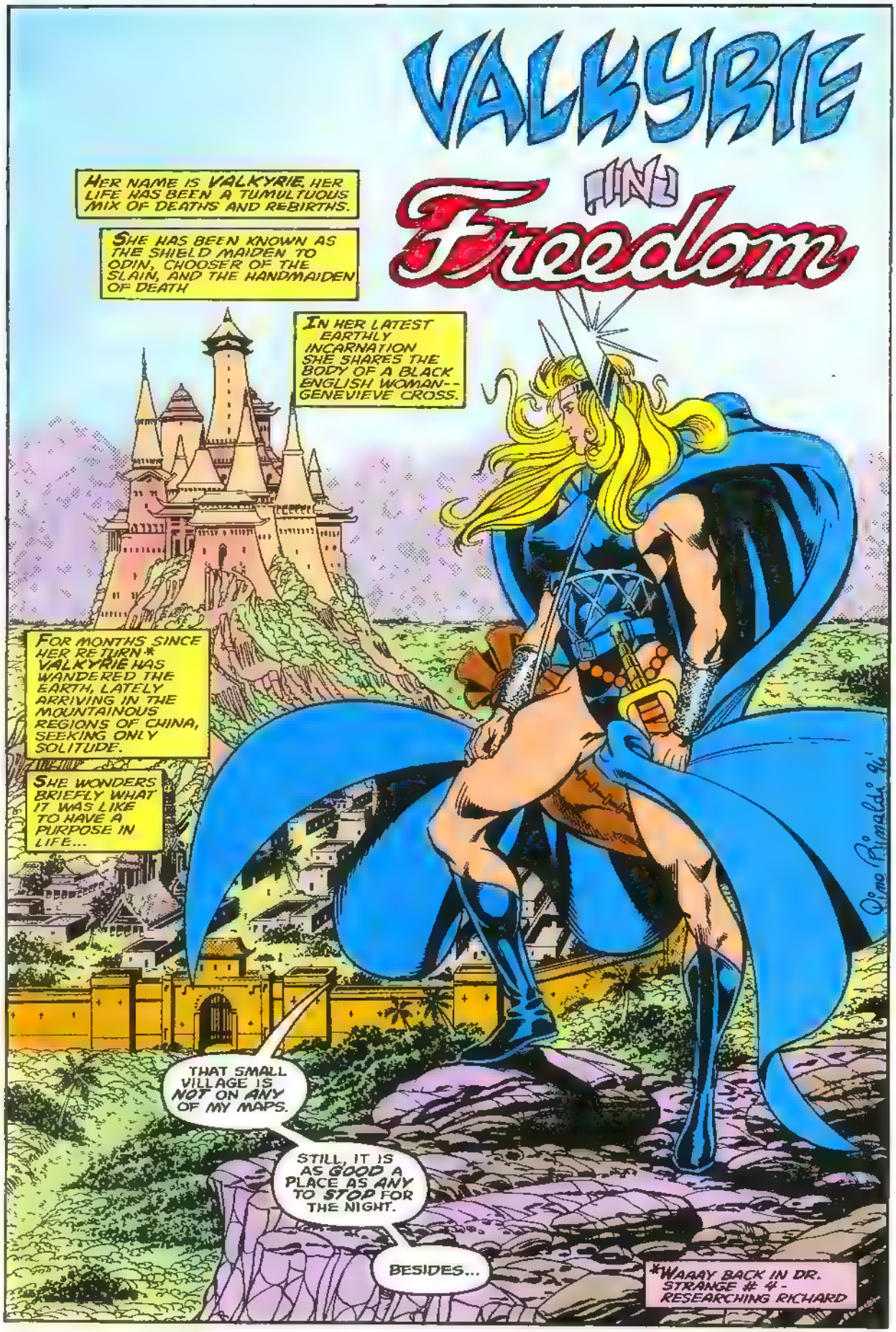

I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU, WAR MACHINE! C'MON, THEN--, C'MON!!
IS IT MY IMAGINATION...
... OR IS VENGEANCE GETTING MORE VIOLENT AS THIS GOES ON?


I'D BETTER END THIS QUICKLY...

... BUT SINCE MY ONBOARD SYSTEMS DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM, I'M NOT SURE HOW!
SPECTROGRAPHIC ANALYSIS: INCONCLUSIVE
INFRARED SCAN: INCONCLUSIVE
LIFE SIGNS: INCONCLUSIVE


STILL, MY REPULSOR RAYS SHOULD KNOCK THE WIND OUT OF HIM-- IF THEY HAVEN'T CONKED OUT ON MY--
ALERT! ALERT! MASSIVE POWER SURGE BUILDING FROM TARGET
UH-OH.

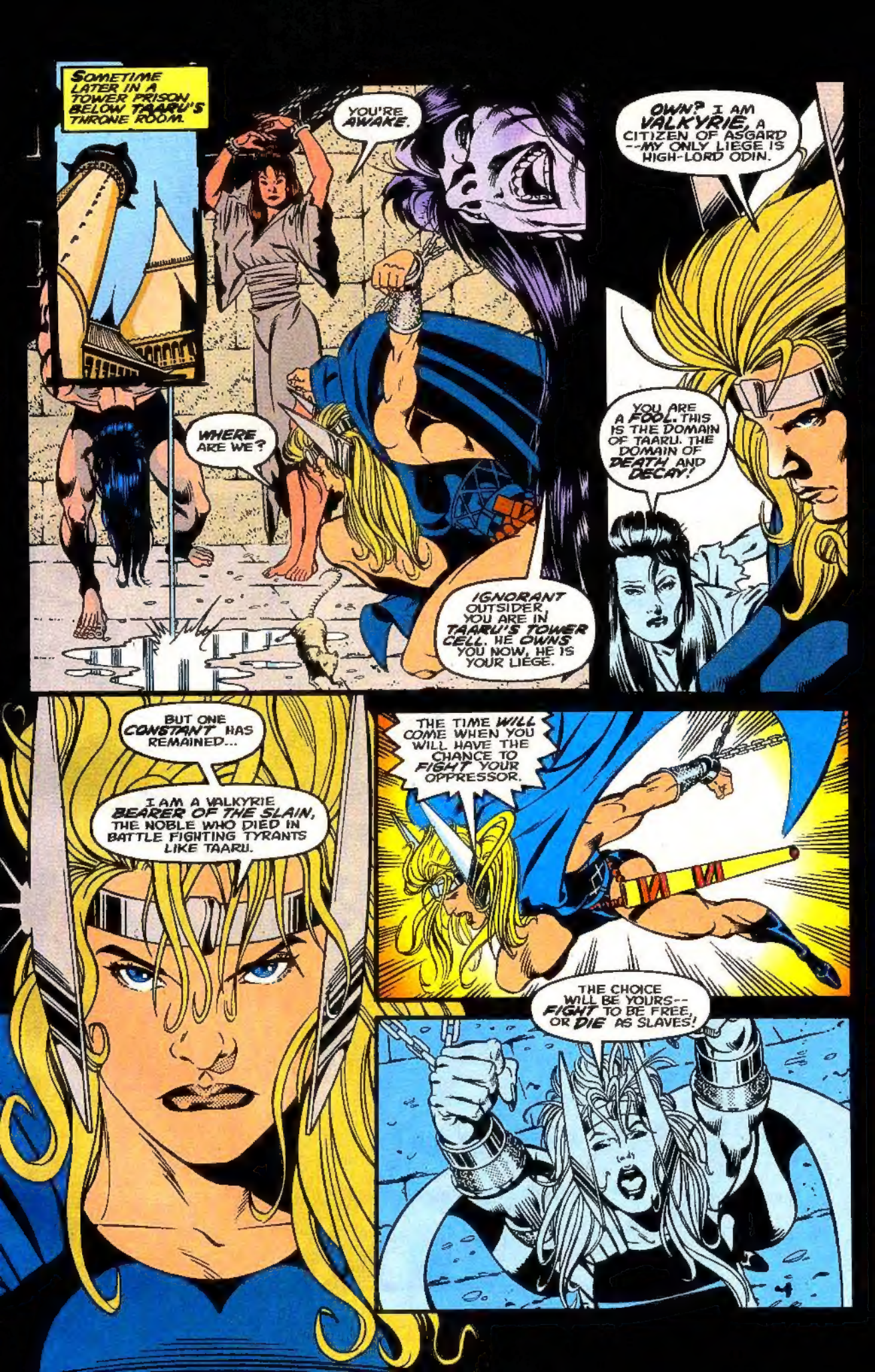

KHOOOM
WHAT... THE HECK... WAS THAT? AS IF MY SYSTEMS WEREN'T FRIED ENOUGH BEFORE...!
SEEMS MY HELLFIRE TOOK A LOT MORE OUT OF YOU THAN YOUR REPULSORS DID FROM ME.
WHICH IS TOO BAD, REALLY...
...FOR YOU!
TO BE CONCLUDED!


VALKYRIE
FINDS
Freedom
HER NAME IS VALKYRIE. HER LIFE HAS BEEN A TUMULTUOUS MIX OF DEATHS AND REBIRTHS.
SHE HAS BEEN KNOWN AS THE SHIELD MAIDEN TO ODIN, CHOOSER OF THE SLAIN, AND THE HANDMAIDEN OF DEATH
IN HER LATEST EARTHLY INCARNATION SHE SHARES THE BODY OF A BLACK ENGLISH WOMAN--GENEVIEVE CROSS.
FOR MONTHS SINCE HER RETURN* VALKYRIE HAS WANDERED THE EARTH, LATELY ARRIVING IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS OF CHINA, SEEKING ONLY SOLITUDE.
SHE WONDERS BRIEFLY WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE...
THAT SMALL VILLAGE IS NOT ON ANY OF MY MAPS.
STILL, IT IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO STOP FOR THE NIGHT.
BESIDES...
*WAAAY BACK IN DR. STRANGE # 4 - RESEARCHING RICHARD
Dino Rinaldi '91

. . IT WILL BE A WELCOME CHANGE OF PACE TO EAT A HOT MEAL AND SLEEP IN A WARM BED. EVEN A WARRIOR DESERVES SOME.
.. CREATURE COMFORTS?
AARRRGH!
KRAAK
SWOOOSH
WHAT IS GOING ON.
WHOOF
SPOOSH
WHO ARE THESE...
KKRAMM

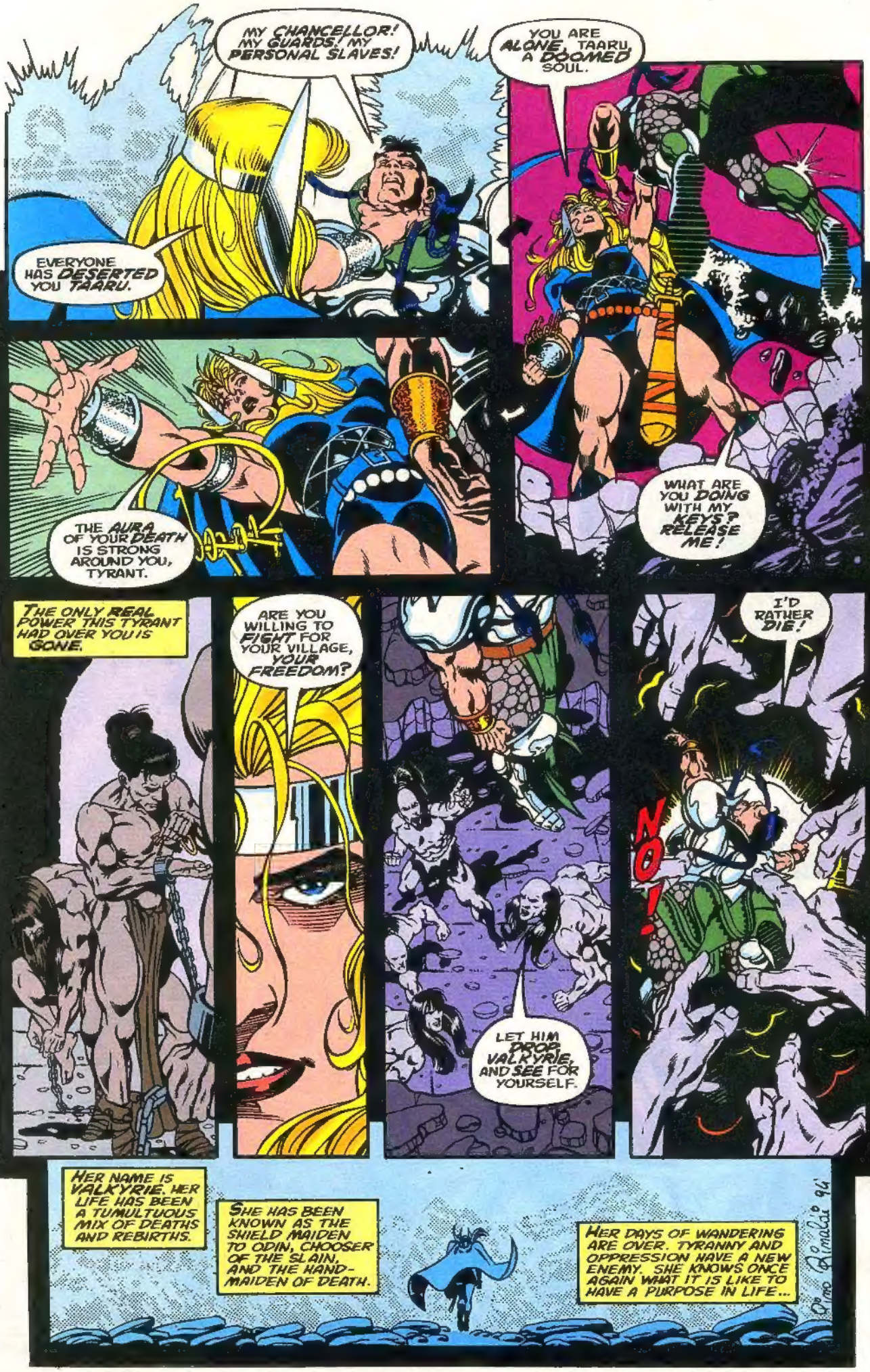
ALL RIGHT BOYS, YOU HAVE HAD YOUR FUN.
NOW IT IS MY TURN!
VALKYRIE'S ENCHANTED SWORD DRAGONFANG POWERED BY HER ASGARDIAN STRENGTH IS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THESE BASE ELEMENTALS
NOT SO EASY WHEN YOUR PREY FIGHTS BACK, IS IT?

I HAVE LOST DRAGONFANG!
SPLOOSH
THIS CREATURE IS EXERTING TREMENDOUS WATER PRESSURE...
I'M DROWNING!!
YOU'VE HELD OUT LONGER THAN MOST, GOLDEN HAIR. YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE AN EXCELLENT ADDITION TO MY STABLE!
QUICKLY, WIND CREATURE, SMASH HER INTO THE MOUNTAIN! I WANT HER ALIVE BUT SUBDUED!
TOO MANY OF THEM...
CAN'T BREATHE ...CAN'T..
WHAM
SWOOSH
SUCH IS THE FATE OF ALL WHO OPPOSE TAARU-THE TERRIBLE!


SOMETIME LATER IN A TOWER PRISON BELOW TAARU'S THRONE ROOM.
YOU'RE AWAKE.
WHERE ARE WE?
IGNORANT OUTSIDER YOU ARE IN TAARU'S TOWER CELL. HE OWNS YOU NOW, HE IS YOUR LIEGE.
OWN? I AM VALKYRIE, A CITIZEN OF ASGARD --MY ONLY LIEGE IS HIGH-LORD ODIN.
YOU ARE A FOOL. THIS IS THE DOMAIN OF TAARU. THE DOMAIN OF DEATH AND DECAY!
BUT ONE CONSTANT HAS REMAINED...
I AM A VALKYRIE BEARER OF THE SLAIN, THE NOBLE WHO DIED IN BATTLE FIGHTING TYRANTS LIKE TAARU.
THE TIME WILL COME WHEN YOU WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO FIGHT YOUR OPPRESSOR.
THE CHOICE WILL BE YOURS-- FIGHT TO BE FREE, OR DIE AS SLAVES!

ANY FURTHER CONVERSATION IS INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF TAARU'S CHANCELLOR WITH THE PALACE GUARD.
TAARU WANTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY, GOLDEN HAIR.
HELP, PLEASE... FOOD...WATER.
COME NO CLOSER TO TAARU'S CHANCELLOR YOU PIECE OF FILTH, OR YOU SHALL LOSE YOUR HAND!
TAARU IS GOING TO GET MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.
WE'LL SEE GOLDEN HAIR.
COME IN, GOLDEN HAIR, AND WELCOME TO MY PLEASURE PALACE.
DO YOU REALIZE WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO WOMAN? I AM TAARU THE TERRIBLE! I HOLD THE FABLED ANCIENT TALISMANS OF POWER*!
THE NAME IS VALKYRIE. AS FAR AS YOUR "PALACE" IS CONCERNED, I'VE SEEN PALACES WHICH MAKE THIS LOOK LIKE A CLOSET.
I OWN EVERYTHING, AND EVERYONE! AND NOW THAT INCLUDES YOU AND THIS MAGNIFICENT SWORD.
MAYBE, BUT ALL I SEE IS A BIG-EARED, PETTY LITTLE TYRANT WHO RULES THROUGH FEAR AND INTIMIDATION.
I AM NOT IMPRESSED.
*LAST SEEN IN F.F. # 232- RICHARD AGAIN!

YOU NEED TO BE TAUGHT A LESSON IN HUMILITY, GOLDEN HAIR.
I THINK NOT!
YOU ARE!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I AM NOT THE ONE WHO IS GOING TO BE LEARNING LESSONS TODAY...
YOU CAUGHT ME BY SURPRISE ONCE, NEVER AGAIN.
KRAKK
KILL HER, MY ELEMENTAL PETS! I WANT HER DEAD!
I HAVE BEEN DEAD BEFORE TAARU, I HAVE A NASTY HABIT OF COMING BACK.
FREE US!
HELP! GET US OUT!
IT IS OVER LITTLE MAN!
LIKE MOST BULLIES YOU ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS THE WEAPONS AND PEOPLE YOU HIDE BEHIND.
LET US SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE WITHOUT THE TALISMANS!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?! MY CREATURES ARE DISAPPEARING!


MY CHANCELLOR! MY GUARDS! MY PERSONAL SLAVES!
EVERYONE HAS DESERTED YOU TAARU.
YOU ARE ALONE, TAARU, A DOOMED SOUL.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY KEYS? RELEASE ME!
THE AURA OF YOUR DEATH IS STRONG AROUND YOU, TYRANT.
THE ONLY REAL POWER THIS TYRANT HAD OVER YOU IS GONE.
ARE YOU WILLING TO FIGHT FOR YOUR VILLAGE, YOUR FREEDOM?
LET HIM DROP, VALKYRIE, AND SEE FOR YOURSELF.
I'D RATHER DIE!
NO!
HER NAME IS VALKYRIE. HER LIFE HAS BEEN A TUMULTUOUS MIX OF DEATHS AND REBIRTHS.
SHE HAS BEEN KNOWN AS THE SHIELD MAIDEN TO ODIN, CHOOSER OF THE SLAIN, AND THE HAND-MAIDEN OF DEATH.
HER DAYS OF WANDERING ARE OVER. TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION HAVE A NEW ENEMY. SHE KNOWS ONCE AGAIN WHAT IT IS LIKE TO HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE...
Dino Almalis '94